

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-11

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PEPR, US, JO

SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS' MEETING WITH ABU
AWDAH

1. ON APRIL 21, ASSISTANT SECRETARY SAUNDERS MET WITH
JORDAN'S MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ABU AWDAH, WHO WAS
IN THE U.S. FOLLOWING HIS PARTICIPATION AT THE CONFERENCE
OF NON-ALIGNED NEWS AGENCIES POOL IN HAVANA.

2. MR. SAUNDERS REVIEWED CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS, MAKING
FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- THE U.S. IS ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS ON WAYS THAT WILL
MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO REJOIN THE PEACE
NEGOTIATIONS. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN
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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES IS AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE. THAT
DECLARATION WILL BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN 242 ON THE MAJOR
ISSUES, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE PALESTINIAN
QUESTION.

-- IT IS NECESSARY, HOWEVER, TO GO BEYOND THE DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES TO DEVELOP A NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK WITHIN

WHICH THE WEST BANK/GAZA ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED. THIS MEANS
BRINGING THE ISRAELIS TO AGREE TO THE INTERNATIONALLY

AGREED CONCEPT OF WITHDRAWAL UNDER 242. WE WANT TO
DEVELOP AN APPROACH TO THIS ISSUE WHICH WILL BE SPECIFIC
AND INVITING ENOUGH SO THAT JORDAN WILL SENSE IT HAS
ADEQUATE ASSURANCE THAT SOMETHING SERIOUS WILL BE ACHIEVED
IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT IT WOULD JOIN. WITHIN SUCH AN
APPROACH OR FRAMEWORK, WE HOPE THAT THE PALESTINIANS THEM-
SELVES WILL BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEGOTIATING
PROCESS.

-- WE HAVE THE BEGIN SELF-RULE PLAN FOR THE WEST BANK AND
GAZA. ALTHOUGH WE TOLD THE ISRAELIS IT WAS AN IMPORTANT
FIRST STEP AND A BASIS FOR FURTHER WORK, IT IS INCOMPLETE
IN MANY WAYS. WE NOW WANT IDEAS FROM THE ARAB SIDE.
WHEN WE HAVE THEM, WE WILL LOOK AT ALL PROPOSALS AND FROM
THEM GENERATE FURTHER IDEAS OF OUR OWN.

-- NO ONE ARGUES WITH THE CONCEPT OF SELF-RULE. THE
QUESTION IS WHETHER IT WOULD BE GENUINE. WE HAVE EXPLAINED
TO THE ISRAELIS THAT WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT THEY CONCEIVE
AS HAPPENING IN A TRANSITION PERIOD, WHAT WILL BE THE
PRECISE LIMITS OF ISRAEL'S ROLE DURING THE FIVE-YEAR
PERIOD, AND WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN AT THE END OF AND
AFTER THE INTERIM PERIOD. THIS PLAN MUST CLEARLY DEFINE
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HOW SECURITY IS TO BE ASSURED AND THE ROLE OF THE WEST
BANK AUTHORITIES IN THIS REGARD.

-- WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS REALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT A
FULLY INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE, POSSIBLY DOMINATED
BY THE PLO, COULD BE ESTABLISHED. THERE IS A NEED FOR
AN INTERIM AGREEMENT AND FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD DURING
WHICH WE CAN SET UP A MECHANISM TO MAKE FURTHER DECISIONS
REGARDING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AS THEY ARE NEEDED.

3. ABU AWDAH RESPONDED THAT AT THIS POINT WEST
BANKERS SHOULD FOCUS ON THE ISSUE OF WITHDRAWAL VERSUS
NON-WITHDRAWAL RATHER THAN ON WHAT THE FUTURE OF THE WEST
BANK WILL BE AFTER WITHDRAWAL. IT IS CLEAR THE ISRAELIS
WON'T WITHDRAW NOW TO PERMIT AN INDEPENDENT STATE UNDER
THE PLO. THE WEST BANKERS THEREFORE SHOULD CONCENTRATE
ON DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT WOULD RESULT IN
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. (ABU AWDAH MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IF
WEST BANKERS UNDERSTOOD THAT WITHDRAWAL COULD TAKE PLACE
ONLY BY LINKING THE WEST BANK WITH JORDAN, THEY WOULD
SOON FIND SUCH LINKS A PALATABLE ALTERNATIVE TO AN
INDEPENDENT STATE.)

4. ABU AWDAH ALSO MENTIONED HIS CONCERN THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT THE FIRST STAGES OF THEIR SELF-RULE PLAN ON THE WEST BANK. HE STATED HE HAD LEARNED

BANK OFFICIALS AND URGED THEM IN STRONG TERMS TO ACCEPT SELF-GOVERNMENT AND (2) INSPIRED AN ISRAELI COLLABORATOR IN HEBRON TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR CIRCUMVENTING THE AUTHORITY OF LOCALLY-ELECTED MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. MR. SAUNDERS POINTED OUT THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE SAID THEY HAVE THE OPTION TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN THEMSELVES AND THAT PERHAPS THEIR CURRENT ACTIVITIES ON THE WEST BANK WERE TESTING THE POSSIBILITY OF DOING SO. AT MR. SAUNDERS' REQUEST, ABU AWDAH AGREED THAT HE WOULD KEEP US UP TO DATE

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ON FURTHER SUCH ISRAELI ACTIVITIES AS HE LEARNS OF THEM.

CHRISTOPHER

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